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Radin Luqman: Police Stabbing in Malaysia Raises Questions About Future of Recently Disbanded Jemaah Islamiyah

Jacob Zenn

Executive Summary

- On May 17, Radin Luqman carried out a stabbing spree in Malaysia that killed two police officers and injured a third. Luqman is believed to be part of a cell affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which officially dissolved itself after the Bali bombings in 2002, and has been inactive for a decade. This has raised concerns over a possible revival of JI.
- On June 30, 16 of JI's surviving leaders, including several who are still in prison, declared that the group was dissolved once again at an event hosted by Indonesia's elite counter-terrorism unit, Densus 88.

On May 17, a young man named Radin Luqman carried out a stabbing spree in the Ulu Tiram District of the southern Malaysian state of Johor. Luqman is believed to be a member of or otherwise affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Given the fact that JI has carried out very few successful attacks over the past decade, the fact that this stabbing led to the death of two police officers (and injured a third) has raised concerns over a possible revival of JI ([Benar News](#), May 17). Yet, Luqman's radicalization and the recent attack reflect a generation of militants that are less lethal and less well-networked than JI has been previously.

The nature of Luqman's attack suggested that he was, in fact, part of a cell, which could indicate a broader JI network. For example, the stabbing seemingly began when a couple created a diversion by making a false police report based on an event two years ago at a police station. Soon after this, Luqman took advantage of the confusion by attacking the distracted police officers ([Channel News Asia](#), May 17).

Rather than the large-scale attacks of JI's past, such as the 2002 Bali bombings, Luqman appears to continue the trend of

small-scale “family jihad.” This has involved entire families in Southeast Asia—particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines—conducting terrorist attacks together. In these scenarios, one family member radicalizes their relations and encourages them to carry out attacks, ranging from children, cousins, and spouses to brothers and sisters-in-law ([The Sydney Morning Herald](#), May 16, 2018). For example, Luqman’s own father had been a JI member and is said to have educated Luqman and his siblings himself—making it all the more likely that Luqman was essentially groomed to join JI ([The Straits Times](#) [Singapore], May 18). Further, his father allegedly pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS) in 2014 and four other members of his family were arrested after the attack ([AP News](#), June 19; [Malay Mail](#), May 18).

Luqman’s radicalization also reflects his broader environment. His home region is host to Luqmanul Hakiem Islamic School, which was shut down by Malaysian authorities one year after 9/11. This was both because it was a known breeding ground for JI recruitment and for being founded by one of JI’s initial members, Abdullah Sungkar ([LA Times](#), April 1, 2003). Further, Abubakar Baasyir, who is largely credited with cofounding JI with Sungkar, was a teacher at the school. Another teacher was Riduan Isamuddin (“Hambali”), who became head of JI’s operations until his arrest in Thailand in 2003 and extradition to the United States. He has been imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay since 2006 ([Al Jazeera](#), April 24, 2023).

While JI officially dissolved itself in the wake of the Bali Bombing in 2002, it continued to exist until quite recently. On June 30, 16 of JI’s surviving leaders (including several who are still in prison) declared that the group was dissolved once and for all at an event hosted by Indonesia’s elite counter-terrorism unit, Densus 88 ([Channel News Asia](#), July 4). Popular support for JI has been low, as the group previously alienated the population

of Indonesia and Malaysia by killing too many civilians. Likewise, the past decade of failed operations sapped the group’s support from radicals. Regardless of the sincerity of JI’s dissolution, remnants of the JI network remain active and have made no such renunciation of violence—as can be seen by Luqman’s recent fatal attack, performed under the influence of JI’s radical ideology.

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Qasim Gujjar: Lashkar-e-Taiba Militant Behind Attacks in Kashmir Designated as Terrorist by India

Animesh Roul

Executive Summary

- On March 7, India's Ministry of Home Affairs designated 41-year-old Kashmiri militant Mohammad Qasim Gujjar as a terrorist. Gujjar has been involved in multiple high-profile attacks, financed and supplied arms to terrorists, and is a major recruiter for the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba. Gujjar has been especially effective at radicalizing relatives of deceased militants.

On March 7, India's Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) designated the 41-year-old firebrand militant Mohammad Qasim Gujjar as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). **[1]** In early April, the Jammu and Kashmir Police announced a one million rupee (approx. \$11,980) reward for the whereabouts of Gujjar, who is also known as “Suleman” in Kashmir militant circles ([Rising Kashmir](#), April 2).

A resident of the village of Angralla in the Reasi District of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujjar has been implicated in a series of high-profile attacks. These reflect his extensive involvement in terrorist activities, including the coordination and supply of arms and ammunition as well as the rising use of drone technology to evade traditional surveillance and border controls. The MHA's notification elaborates on Gujjar's role in identifying strategic locations for the drop-off of military-grade equipment, thereby enabling militant operations within India. Further, Gujjar has been involved in the planning and execution of multiple attacks, including bombings, which have caused numerous deaths and injuries ([Press Information Bureau](#), March 7).

According to the police, Gujjar radicalized others, recruiting them into cells in Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a group which he also worked to help finance. These new "hybrid" cells are intended to expand the operational capabilities of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) within India through both direct contact and digital means, including social media platforms ([Hindustan Times](#), March 7).

Orchestrating Terror

Qasim Gujjar first became a militant in Kashmir in 2002 but fled the country to the Pakistan-administered section of Kashmir in 2009. Trained in LeT camps located there, Gujjar returned to the Indian part of Kashmir to launch attacks after the abrogation of Article 370 (the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir State's constitutional autonomy) in mid-2019. Although he was on the radar of the security apparatus in the region, Gujjar only became a wanted militant after masterminding several major violent incidents, such as attacks on Hindu devotees in Jammu and a grenade attack on a local political leader. Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested several militants, including Mohd Auraf Sheikh, who were affiliated with Gujjar and carried out subversive activities on his instruction

([Indian Express](#), May 5, 2023; [The Print](#), March 8).

Gujjar had orchestrated a twin bombing on January 21, 2023, in the Narwal area of Jammu, which injured seven people. This occurred one week before India's Republic Day celebration. Previously, a grenade attack was carried out targeting a local BJP leader, Jasbir Singh, at his residence at Khandli Chowk in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri District on August 13, 2021. The BJP leader's nephew was killed, and six of his relatives were seriously injured in the attack ([India Today](#), August 13, 2021). After prolonged investigations into the incident, in January 2023, police charged an already arrested LeT operative, Altaf Hussain Shah, and the elusive Gujjar for the grenade attack ([Daily Excelsior](#), January 17, 2023).

Gujjar was one of the masterminds behind the attack on Hindu pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi shrine on May 13, 2022. Four people were killed in the attack, and more than two dozen people were injured when the militants set fire to the pilgrim's bus using a sticky bomb. Hitherto unknown terrorist group Jammu Kashmir Freedom Fighters (JKFF) had claimed responsibility for carrying out this incident at the time. JKFF's statement blamed "the Hindutva [radical Hindu nationalist] regime in India for changing the demography of Jammu and Kashmir." Since 2020, hybrid groups like JKFF have emerged to localize the militant movement in Kashmir, including The Resistance Front (TRF), People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), and Ghaznavi Forces, which have perpetrated attacks against civilians and security forces as proxies for Pakistan-based LeT and Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM). They also use drones to transport arms and ammunition across borders. Police believe Gujjar has been playing a pivotal role in supplying and coordinating the delivery of arms as well as channeling funds for these terrorist groups ([Hindustan Times](#), November 24, 2022; [Kashmir Horizon](#), April 2).

Conclusion

Qasim Gujjar remains one of the LeT's prime "influencers" and utilizes social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to recruit new members. This has been especially effective, given his focus on relatives of deceased militants. Gujjar encouraged them to join the militant campaign in Kashmir and approximately 50 individuals from the Reasi District, especially the Mahore Area, crossed into Pakistan-administered Kashmir to operate as his accomplices ([The Print](#), March 8). In his role as an "influencer," Gujjar not only inspired these recruits but also facilitated their activities by providing funding and weapons to support attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

In addition, Gujjar is also a prime suspect in a series of recent violent attacks, including the June 9 attack on a passenger bus returning from Shiv Khori shrine in Reasi District. The indiscriminate firing at the Hindu pilgrims' bus killed nine people and injured more than 30 others. An LeT front group claimed responsibility for the operation ([The Print](#), June 10).

In the volatile Kashmir region, the recent uptick in attacks appears to be an effort by militant groups and their promoters to maintain relevance and momentum. Sporadic violent incidents involving civilian casualties and military fatalities are aimed at destabilizing the region's security apparatus. Amid these realities, the designation of Gujjar as a terrorist by the Indian government is part of an effort to curb individual militant masterminds who can influence and incite attacks in Kashmir.

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Notes:

[1] Ministry Of Home Affairs Notification, *The Gazette of India*, No, 1063, March 07,

2024.

https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/Individual_Terrorists/MOHAMMADQASIM_GUJJAR_07032024.pdf

Mohammad Kamrul Hasan: Islamic State Bengal Leader Continues to Live Abroad in Turkey

Iftekhharul Bashar

Executive Summary

- The current emir of Islamic State Bengal (ISB)/"Neo-JMB" (Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) is Mohammad Kamrul Hasan. An able recruiter and mastermind behind numerous bombings in Dhaka, Kamrul is in Turkish custody awaiting transfer back to Bangladesh.

Mohammad Kamrul Hasan (also known as "Mahadi Hasan John" and "Abu Abbas Al-Bengali") is the latest emir of Islamic State Bengal (ISB), which is locally labeled as the "Neo-JMB" (Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) ([Kalbela](#), July 1, 2023). [1] Kamrul was arrested by Turkish authorities and is currently out on bail, but has been implicated in numerous cases in Bangladesh related to orchestrating attacks and reorganizing ISB while based out of Turkey ([The Daily Star](#) [Bangladesh], January 1). He allegedly targeted law enforcement personnel throughout Bangladesh, including in the capital Dhaka as well as the cities of Narayanganj and Bogura ([Rajshahi News24](#), March 1, 2023).

Background and Radicalization

Kamrul is in his late twenties and hails from Jaypurpara, which is in the Dupchanchia

sub-district of Bogura in the restive northwest region of Bangladesh, known for its militancy. Born to Md. Abu Sayeed, who is deceased, and Mossammat Rehana Parveen, Kamrul was educated in mainstream schools. He began his education at the local Shapla Kindergarten School. From there, he moved to Dupchanchia Pilot School and, before going abroad, he was a student of Dupchanchia J.K. College ([Amader Shomoy](#), March 2, 2023).

In 2007, Kamrul's life took a turn as he joined Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS), which is the student wing of Bangladesh's largest Islamist political party Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJI). [2] Gradually, he ascended the ranks to become a local leader of ICS in Bogura. However, his involvement in anti-government activities led to legal troubles, with five cases filed against him in 2013. Seeking to distance him from this path, Kamrul's father started arranging for him to leave the country through a middleman ([Amader Shomoy](#), March 2, 2023).

In 2015 and 2016, Kamrul found himself behind bars in Bangladesh due to his alleged anti-government activities. According to a source within the Bangladeshi security apparatus, he was in prison for at least eight months. It was during this period of incarceration that he encountered an inmate named "Saju," who introduced him to the ideology of Islamic State (IS). Little is known about Saju, except that he possibly remains in a Bangladeshi prison. [3]

International Exploits

Upon his release from prison, Kamrul embraced militant ideology and joined Neo-JMB, which supports IS. He forged a close association with a Canadian of Bangladeshi descent, Tamim Chowdhury, who is notorious for his involvement in violent attacks, including the 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery massacre in Dhaka. However, Tamim's demise in a police counter-terrorism operation in August

2016 prompted Kamrul to flee Bangladesh. His subsequent disappearance on a court date in August 2016 marked a significant shift in his trajectory, with him seemingly traveling to Syria, Greece, and Iraq before ending up in Turkey. From Turkey, Kamrul inspired youths in Bangladesh to carry out attacks ([New Age](#) [Bangladesh], July 17, 2021).

Kamrul first traveled from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia on a worker visa. From there, he managed to enter Turkey illegally before making his way to Iraq with a group from Pakistan. Throughout his travels, Kamrul maintained communication with his mother using an imo.im (an encrypted messaging app) number ([Amader Shomoy](#), March 2, 2023). In Iraq, he made contact with IS commander Abu Ayyub al-Samir and later married a Syrian named Umm Abdulah, the widow of an IS leader named Yajuddin ([Amader Shomoy](#), March 1, 2023).

In September 2020, Kamrul assumed the role of emir of the ISB/Neo-JMB while he was abroad. Later, under the alias of "Abu Abbas al-Bengali," he continued to propagate messages for the organization on the internet. Kamrul took over the group at a critical time, as its leadership was in disarray due to dismantlement by sustained law enforcement operations by the Bangladeshi authorities.

Role in Terrorism, Arrest, and Bail

Neo-JMB faced severe setbacks after the IS-claimed Holey Artisan Bakery attack in Dhaka in 2016 brought down the full force of Bangladeshi law enforcement upon them. Many of the group's leaders and key members were killed or arrested. However, the group became active again within three years, as evidenced by the 2019 attack near the Gulistan Cinema Hall in the Gulistan Area of Dhaka. Additionally, remote-controlled bombings occurred in Malibagh and the Science Laboratory Area of Dhaka that same year. Furthermore, two bombs were set off near police boxes in the busiest intersections of the capital, in the Paltan and Khamarbari Areas of Dhaka.

These explosions, all in the evening, injured a number of police personnel and civilians. All incidents occurred in the evening. The police have directly linked Kamrul to all these attacks. Moreover, he was identified as the mastermind behind attacks in Comilla in 2020 and Narayanganj in 2021, all while still being based in Turkey ([Desh Rupantor](#), November 7, 2021).

According to Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) sources, Kamrul inspired Bangladeshi youth toward terrorism through various apps. These included imo.im and Telegram. Kamrul collaborated with associates from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Singapore, who facilitated operations in Bangladesh ([New Age](#), July 17, 2021). He advocated for ISB members to undergo bomb-making training ([Ajker Patrika](#), July 15, 2021). Under Kamrul's leadership, Jahid Hasan of the military wing of the Neo-JMB attempted to create drones by studying online instructional videos. His intention was to equip these drones with explosives for carrying out attacks—which was fortunately foiled when he was arrested in 2021 ([The Daily Star](#) [Bangladesh], July 30, 2021).

Members of the Special Action Group of the CTTC of Dhaka kept an eye on Kamrul's movements using advanced surveillance technology. Subsequently, he was reported to law enforcement agencies in Turkey by the CTTC ([Rajshahi News24](#), March 1, 2023). Even though Kamrul was arrested, he is currently on bail and reportedly under surveillance by the Turkish authorities. Meanwhile, upon the request of the Bangladesh Police, an Interpol red notice has been issued against Kamrul and efforts are underway to bring him back to Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Mohammad Kamrul Hasan has become a notable figure in ISB and has directed numerous attacks in Bangladesh. Despite being apprehended in Turkey, Kamrul's role in coordinating terrorism from abroad

underscores the persistent threat he poses. Since Turkish law enforcement authorities apprehended him, no successor has been announced by ISB ([Bangla Tribune](#), July 1, 2023). The collaborative efforts of the CTTC and international intelligence agencies demonstrate the continued necessity of global cooperation in combating extremism. His case also highlights the ongoing challenge of radicalization in prisons, the transnational networks of terrorist groups, and the imperative of proactive measures to prevent future attacks.

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Notes:

[1] The term "Neo-JMB" is used by Bangladeshi authorities to refer to ISB, which is a group primarily made up of members from Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). The government coined the term "Neo-JMB" to distinguish this IS-inspired faction from the banned JMB, as many JMB members joined this new group after 2014 and worked alongside Junud at-Tawheed Wal Khilafah coordinator Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, who was a Bangladeshi-Canadian killed during a police raid in Narayanganj on August 27, 2016. Sharing the ideology of the IS, this group maintains ties with both the core IS organization and its South Asia-affiliated counterpart, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP).

[2] Since the early 2000s, numerous prominent terrorist leaders in Bangladesh have had previous ties to ICS or its parent organization, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJI). In 2013, the High Court Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court declared the registration of the BJI illegal and that the party was unfit to contest national polls. The court ruled that Jamaat's charter, which called for establishing a state based on Islamic values, was incompatible with Bangladesh's secular principles as

enshrined in its constitution. In November 2023, the Appellate Division dismissed the BJI's appeal against the High Court order that declared the registration of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami illegal.

[3] Author's interview of a Bangladeshi security professional, May 2024.

Peng Daxun: MNDA Leader in Myanmar Retakes Kokang With Chinese Assistance

Scott N. Romaniuk and Khandakar Tahmid Rezwan

Executive Summary

- Peng Daxun leads the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA), one of three major ethnic militias in Myanmar. The MNDA, alongside the Arakan Army and Ta'ang National Liberation Front, launched a major offensive on October 27, 2023, against the forces of Myanmar's junta, which has seen major successes. This includes retaking the eponymous homeland of the Kokang people in January, which controls key trade routes with China.
- Peng Daxun's father, Peng Jiasheng, led the MNDA in Kokang until 2009, when he was forced into exile in China after being betrayed by a top lieutenant. China provided critical support to Peng Jiasheng and his son.
- With aid from Beijing, the younger Peng rebuilt the MNDA. The MNDA gathered its strength until 2021. As part of the deal to gain Chinese support, he has cracked down on gambling and the production and trade of illicit drugs in his territory, which found their way to the neighboring Chinese territory.
- Peng Daxun is a figure with a mixed reputation: he has demonstrated a contempt for human rights, but is also a sound commander with a proven record against the junta's superior forces.

Peng Daxun, the military mastermind and foremost leader of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), has been at the forefront of the ongoing civil war in Myanmar since his army achieved a victory against the Myanmar junta's army (Tatmadaw) in northeastern Shan State ([The Irrawaddy](#), November 11, 2023). Myanmar is home to many ethnic armed militias, but what distinguishes the MNDAA is its recapture of majority-Kokang (ethnicity) territories and their establishment of effective control through successive military campaigns since "Operation 1027." Three of the strongest ethnic armed militias, the Arakan Army (AA), MNDAA, and Ta'ang National Liberation Front (TNLA), collectively known as the "Three Brotherhood Alliance" in western and northeastern Myanmar, launched this operation on October 27, 2023. It is one of the largest combined military offensives against the junta seen in the war so far ([Al Jazeera](#), January 16).

The ongoing offensive in Myanmar represents Peng Daxun's most successful military achievement ([Myanmar Now](#), January 3). His low profile is one of the reasons he has not received as much attention as his father. However, Peng Daxun's significance lies in the present geopolitical realities of the Kokang Zone in Shan State. He now controls the territories that strategically border the major trade routes to China, and any decision by him, such as deepening ties with Beijing, will have a significant impact on the civil war in Myanmar ([The Fulcrum](#), November 14, 2023).

Like Father, Like Son

Born in 1965, Peng Daxun became a cabinet minister in Myanmar under his father, Peng Jiasheng, who was the first leader of the MNDAA from 1995 until 2009. Peng Jiasheng's army suffered its final blow on August 30, 2009, when it surrendered to the Tatmadaw and fled to China. The MNDAA had controlled Shan State Special Region 1 since 1989, an area which includes the Kokang homeland.

China's objection to drug cultivation and trading, an internal shift of allegiance in the MNDAA toward the Myanmar junta, and the Tatmadaw's vision of neutralizing ethnic armed militias by integrating them into the state military apparatus all contributed to the MNDAA's surrender ([The Irrawaddy](#), August 29, 2009). The MNDAA's second-in-command, Bai Xuoqian, led a faction that collaborated with Tatmadaw and rebelled against Peng Jiasheng loyalists. Ultimately, this latter group mostly fled and surrendered their arms to China, while Bai Xuoqian's loyalists reorganized into a Tatmadaw paramilitary unit, becoming Unit 1006 of the Border Guard Forces.

Peng Jiasheng's long-standing militant leadership career in the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and subsequent formation of MNDAA provided him with valuable military and strategic insight ([BNI](#), June 6, 2013). The MNDAA leadership is also notorious for its involvement in the drug business. Besides this, Peng Daxun had significant involvement in business related to real estate ([Transnational Institute](#), July 2015). When an internal rebellion and external pressure ousted the elder Peng from the MNDAA, his son was among the group's four top-ranking leaders.

With Peng Jiasheng forced to seek exile in China, Peng Daxun (the eldest son) became MNDAA's leader. The events involving his father significantly influenced the younger Peng's leadership style. Ethnic sentiments, avenging betrayals, and the use of stricter measures to achieve MNDAA's objectives shaped Peng Daxun's ideology, personality, and leadership in the lead-up to Operation 1027.

Peng Daxun's Low Profile

After the disastrous defeat under Peng Jiasheng in 2009, the MNDAA mainly remained out of the picture in Myanmar. In 2014, the elder Peng, however, reappeared in an interview with the Chinese Communist Party-controlled *Global Times*, where he reiterated his firm stance to recapture Kokang. Peng Jiasheng publicly

expressed his intention to return Kokang to MNDAA control for the first time since the junta and its collaborators captured it in 2009 ([The Irrawaddy](#), February 25, 2015). A renewed Kokang offensive against the junta and its allied forces in 2015 suggested that this very well might happen ([Shan Herald](#), October 28, 2023). While in the end, the MNDAA failed to make significant gains, the group obtained a strategic victory in the sense that the offensive demonstrated that the MNDAA had strong support in the Kokang region.

The younger Peng's decision to launch the Kokang offensive served as the foundation for all future operations and leadership planning. As previously stated, Peng Daxun has been at the forefront of leading the MNDAA since his father allegedly moved into exile in China. It is also thought he accompanied his father and returned to Kokang in February 2024, after MNDAA's forces achieved total control over the Kokang capital.

This behavior sets Peng Daxun apart from his father. While his father all but disappeared after 2009, the younger Peng exercised visible command and control over MNDAA forces even while in exile. The elder Peng is believed to have continued to have a leadership role in the MNDAA until his death in 2022.

The 2015 Kokang offensive was the first major battle that Peng Daxun oversaw. The younger Peng's early control over the MNDAA reflected his firm ambitions, ability to (re)build a militia force, and capacity to project power while remaining in exile. He was determined to show the Kokang people that he was a worthy successor to his father, which began to solidify with the most recent offensive ([Myanmar Now](#), January 3).

Between 2016 and 2021, Peng Daxun did not attempt any major action against the junta or the regime-allied Border Guard Force (BGF). This period saw only minor skirmishes and clashes. In the meantime, he was determined to learn from the 2015

Kokang offensive by building up his forces and gathering manpower, logistics, and weapons. The younger Peng also started to consolidate financial resources to support and sustain the MNDAA. Avenging the betrayal of his father by the faction that left MNDAA was a major focus of his work during this time. As a result, in 2021, he attempted to assassinate Bai Xuoqian's son ([The Irrawaddy](#), March 8, 2023). At the time, Myanmar's democratic central government allowed Peng Daxun to reenergize and reformulate policies that would be critical for MNDAA's force buildup in a future conflict.

Resumed Clashes

After a period of relative calm, tensions flared when the junta dissolved the civilian government in February 2021 and imposed de facto martial law in Myanmar. Peng Daxun had long anticipated the eventual resumption of hostilities due to the junta's opposition to any ethnic armed militias in Shan State. This motivated him to fully prepare his forces in advance for a battle against the junta. He also formed alliances, befriending two other large ethnic armed militias, the AA and the TNLA ([The Irrawaddy](#), November 25, 2023). This culminated in what became Operation 1027, which has also included other small and medium-sized ethnic armed militias beyond the main three in an effort to form a united front against the junta. Operation 1027 exemplifies the younger Peng's prudence in concealing the asymmetry of forces against the junta via discreet alliances.

Under Peng Daxun's leadership, the MNDAA liberated the capital city of the Kokang Region, Laukkai. This was the first time since 2009 that the Tatmadaw had lost control of the region, and the younger Peng ultimately declared Kokang's independence under MNDAA control ([Radio Free Asia](#), January 5). This achievement reflects Peng Daxun's ability to lead irregular forces to victory over a regular army, allowing him to seize the junta's ammunition and weapons, retake land, and

establish control in the Kokang people's native territory.

Peng Daxun's collaboration and cooperation with China played a crucial role in this victory ([Radio Free Asia](#), January 16). For example, China aided the elder Peng and his son in exile and today provides safe houses, handles logistics, and purchases arms for his group. Therefore, to a certain degree, Peng Daxun is a warlord under Beijing's control. Without Chinese help, it would have been impossible for him to rebuild MNDAA and survive. Accordingly, he paid back China by eliminating illegal drug cultivation and gambling schemes in the Chinese border region, which had rankled Beijing ([Asia Times](#), January 12).

Despite Peng Daxun's successes, he is allegedly ruthless with his people. For example, he reportedly executed undisciplined MNDAA soldiers under his command ([Radio Free Asia](#), April 25). There are also allegations that he has allowed the recruitment of children into the MNDAA's ranks ([The Diplomat](#), January 4). This highlights the younger Peng's long history of breaking the law. A substantial portion of his wealth was obtained from drug syndicates—a practice that the MNDAA continued to enable until Operation 1027, when favorable terms with Beijing became more important ([ISP](#), February 2).

Conclusion

Peng Daxun's execution of Operation 1027 in tandem with the other two major ethnic armed militias exemplifies his leadership abilities and accomplishments. In addition, his cordial ties with China make him a crucial figure in any Myanmar post-civil war scenario. Because of his warlord father's tendencies and his own experiences of betrayal by his own people, he has demonstrated a contempt for human rights alongside his achievements, effective leadership, and sound decision-making. Peng Daxun's efforts will play a crucial role in changing the course of Myanmar's continuing civil conflict in the near future, particularly in the Kokang area.

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